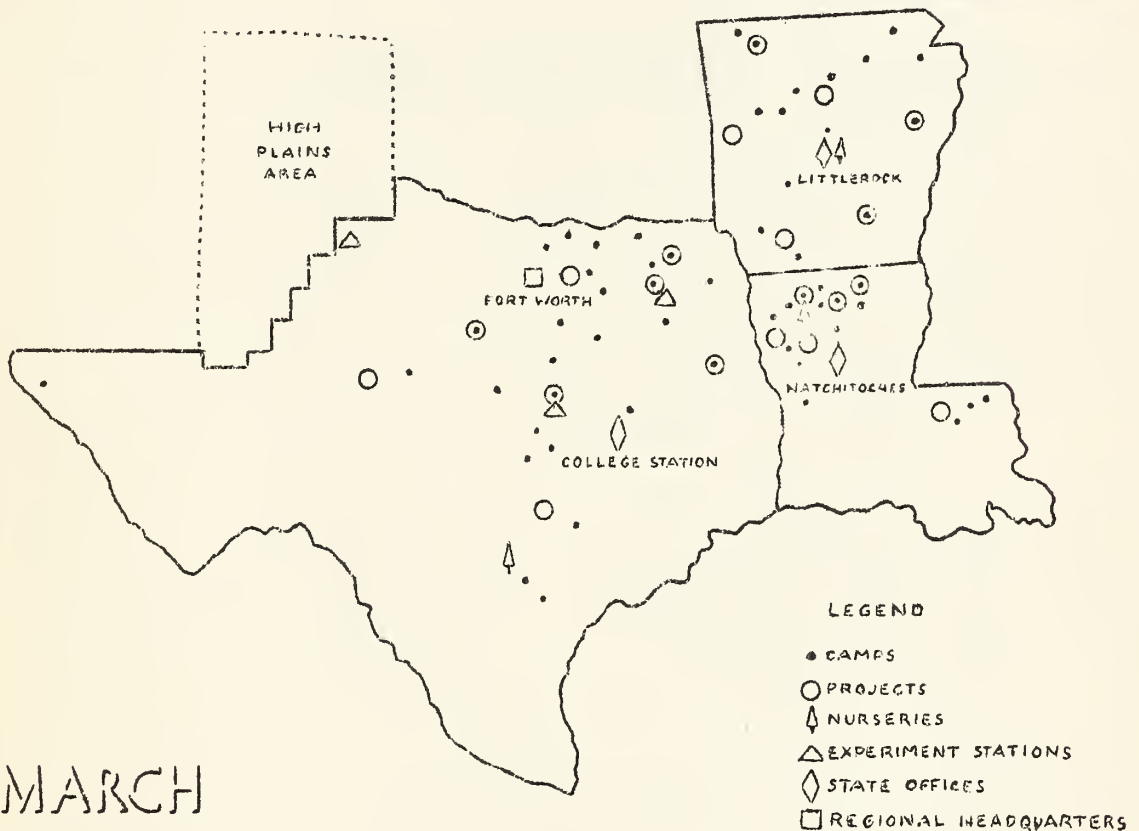
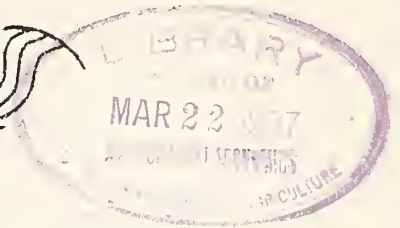


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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

NEW



MARCH

REGION 4
COMPRISING STATES OF LOUISIANA,
ARKANSAS, AND TEXAS EXCEPT
HIGH PLAINS AREA

THE WILDLIFE PHASE OF THE COMPLETE EROSION
CONTROL PROGRAM

By

Homer G. Towns,
Regional Biologist.

Just returned from a meeting in St. Louis of all regional biologists of the Soil Conservation Service. It was revealed in this meeting, from reports made by the biologists; that definite recommendations for the improvement of conditions for wildlife are being made and carried out by the Soil Conservation Service in almost every state.

In a discussion by each regional biologist of the problems occurring in his region, without exception each man brought out three very definite points: (1) that there is a scarcity of food and cover plants in all of our intensely farmed sections of the country; (2) there is a great need for a systematic method of controlling hunting on small privately owned farms; and (3) that woods and pasture fires and the over-grazing of woodlands and pastures were all very detrimental to wildlife. The fact was also revealed that the farmers and all land owners are very anxious to cooperate in carrying out recommendations for the improvement of the land for wildlife. Then as Secretary Henry A. Wallace brought out in his talk before the Second Annual North American Wildlife Conference, "there is land enough to meet generously every national need and every requirement of agriculture, industry, and recreation."

Not only are there plenty of lands so that a part could be devoted to the production of wildlife, but there are hundreds of acres that have not as yet been profitably utilized in anything but the type of vegetation that would support wildlife. I am sure this type of land was what Secretary Wallace had in mind when he stated that "the problem of wildlife restoration is fundamentally one of land utilization." In other words, we have tried to grow cotton and corn on many acres that should have been allowed to remain in trees and shrubs or native prairie grasses. One of the outstanding ways in which the Soil Conservation Service is making a contribution to the conservation of wildlife is by the reorganization of land uses and by planting trees and shrubs on the badly eroded acres, the land which is too steep to remain in cultivation, and on other waste areas that are not being properly utilized at the present time.

We as a nation must decide and very soon whether or not we are going to continue to have the various wildlife species. Then if we decide in favor of wildlife, we must again do one of two things: either grow more or kill less. With the number of hunters increasing every year there is no reason to believe that we will kill less. The fact then remains that if we are to continue to have wildlife, we are going to of necessity have to grow more. Grow more we can if we are only willing to pay the price. The price is to furnish food and cover, or in other words give the birds and small animals a place to live and something to eat. This can be done on almost every farm in the United

States as is being shown by the land utilization programs as planned by the Soil Conservation Service and yet not greatly reduce the crop or other agricultural production of the farm.

In Region 4 the Soil Conservation Service has done the following things all of which are definitely a part of the coordinated erosion control program and have either a direct or indirect bearing toward the improvement of conditions for wildlife:

1. More than 1000 farmers and land owners have signed up as wildlife cooperators and promised to carry out simple game management practices on their lands.
2. About 18,000,000 trees, shrubs, and vines have been planted principally for control of erosion. Yet the acres planted will be protected from grazing and from fire and will become the homes of hundreds of birds and small animals. On the majority of the farms where these plantings have been made, very few wildlife species have been able to exist because of the excessive fires and grazing and thus inadequate food and cover.
3. Then, in addition to the new woody plantings that are to be protected from fire and grazing, more than 200,000 acres of old woodland will be protected. These old woodlands will protect the land from erosion and at the same time will serve as breeding and nesting grounds for the wildlife species and allow the population to increase and eventually supply stock to the newly vegetated areas. So we must not only protect our new tree plantings, but we must also protect the woodlands that we now have.
4. On each of the 7,300 farms that are under agreement in this region, strip crops and winter cover crops of small grains and legumes are being used as a part of the complete erosion control program. All of these plantings furnish food and cover for wildlife and thus helps to increase the wildlife population.
5. Many small streams that were uninhabitable for fish because of silting and from overflow conditions can soon be restocked with fish as a result of the work of the Soil Conservation Service in controlling the excess water and thus the erosion on the lands that make up the watersheds of these small streams.

From surveys that have been made throughout the three states making up this region, it has been estimated that from 3 to 10 percent of the lands badly eroded areas, gullies and small corners could actually be devoted to wildlife food and cover plants and yet not decrease one bit the agricultural production of these farms. With this much land actually devoted to wildlife habitats and then with the additional food and cover that would be made available by the year-around vegetative land use program as recommended by the Soil Conservation Service, we can have a reasonable supply of the wildlife species.

I think there is no one who would not agree that the good top soil and also the number of birds and small animals have been on the gradual decrease for the last several decades. Everyone will also agree that when soil becomes badly eroded it will take several years to build that soil back. Likewise when the wildlife species become greatly reduced, to almost extinction of some species as they now are, it will take several years and the efforts of land owners, sportsmen, and conservationist and educational groups to get the job done. There is a definite place for all to make a contribution - the land owners to furnish the land, technically trained men to plan the farms so as to get proper utilization and production, Federal agencies to cooperate in the revegetation of that land for wildlife needs, sportsmen to cooperate in maintaining the plantings and in the protection of wildlife, and the educational groups to protect the lands from illegal hunting and to educate the people to an appreciation of wildlife and the protection it should have.

WISE LAND USE

"The success of any program of agricultural improvement depends in the long run on the wise use of land. A large portion of our present rural poverty and backwardness comes from unwise methods of land use, and unless we have good land well used, no program for raising the rural standard of living can hope to attain its goal. What is more, poverty on our farms will continue to grow and undermine the constructive work which we are attempting, unless better land use principles are put into practice."

- - - Henry A. Wallace

A VISITOR SEES RED

"Every time I see stalks burning in a field, I can't help seeing red," remarked a recent prominent visitor to the Duck Creek Soil Conservation Project.

In addition to adding plant food to the soil, stalks may contribute much to an erosion control program if properly handled. Stalks, when left in the field, act as a binder in holding the soil together, form miniature dams across the field, create a spongy condition of the soil providing numerous channels for the entrance and storage of water in the soil.

Plant materials such as stalks, leaves, burs and roots, when properly conserved, will strengthen an erosion control program.

- Project SCS-Tex-5,
Garland, Texas.

CAMP ENROLLEES STUDY SOIL CONSERVATION

A course in soil and water conservation is being offered to all enrollees of the Mesquite CCC Camp. The course is directed by E. R. Neuman, who is assisted by other members of the camp staff.

All phases of the erosion control work being completed by the camp are included in the course of instruction. Farm mapping, soils, farm planning, terracing, strip cropping, crop rotation, contour tillage, terrace outlet protection, pasture improvement, wild life improvement, gully control, and the establishment of native meadows, are subjects studied in the classes.

Class room study is supplemented by field practice on the O. C. Hamby farm which is under agreement with the Mesquite Camp. Classes are held on days when weather conditions do not permit field work.

Forty-four classes have been held to date, with good attendance. The boys attend the classes in their regular work section, with either a leader or assistant leader in charge of the group.

- Project SCS-Tex-5,
Garland, Texas.

FARMER PARTICIPATION

The cooperators of the Farmerville camp area are showing remarkable interest in the construction of farmer built terraces which meet with the requirements of the Soil Conservation Service.

In spite of the unfavorable weather which prevailed during December, January, and February, approximately 20 miles of terraces are under construction by 25 cooperators. Six miles of farmer-built terraces have been completed and strip cropped with oats.

By the use of the terracing plow and drag it has required approximately 10 man days and 10 team days to construct a mile of terraces.

The interest shown by our cooperators in the farmer built terraces is tending to further the erosion control work as many farmers are beginning to see the importance of a conservation program and are trying to adopt all phases of the Soil Conservation Service program. It is encouraging to note non-cooperators visiting the cooperators at work, to learn more about the program. Throughout the community many farmers are constructing terraces similar to those of the Soil Conservation Service.

- Project SCS-La-5
Farmerville, Louisiana

MORE PARTICIPATION

It is very gratifying to the Soil Conservation Service, and the public in general, when non-cooperating farmers on the outside of the area, without the assistance of the Soil Conservation Service, adopt and put into practice our principles of erosion control.

Mr. George Owens, on the John Brazier, farm who lived on the W. B. Piles farm last year where he carried on a complete program of erosion control, is making an effort to establish a complete erosion control program on the Brazier farm. The following is an outline of the work done by Mr. Owens this spring:

He has constructed 3 miles of fence, using 4 rolls of new wire and new posts throughout. In addition to this, 8 terraces have been built, the total length of which are approximately a mile and a half. These were constructed with a Martin Ditcher and fills were made with a Fresno. Two diversion terraces have also been constructed.

Mr. Owens states that he is also going to farm on a contour and not up and down the slopes and over the terraces. He has a very definitely planned program for the farm; and next year plans to sod 20 acres of land which is now idle, to Bermuda grass.

Mr. Owens believes that with the proper instruction and supervision 90 percent of the farmers in Scott County can establish a complete program of erosion control on their own farms at their own expense, as he is doing on the Brazier farm.

- Project SCS-Ark-6
Waldron, Arkansas

COOPERATORS HAVE BEEN WORKING

Cooperators on Harts Creek watershed and attached camps are to be congratulated on the amount of work that they have accomplished this month. Many cooperators have spent the entire month on their conservation program while practically all have worked on one or more phases of soil and water conservation plans.

During the month cooperators have contributed 3,271 man hours and 5,168 horse and mule hours. This is a creditable showing and with a continuation of this kind of work the Soil Conservation Service program will mean much to the Harts Creek watershed and to this section of North East Texas.

- Project SCS-Tex-9
Mt. Pleasant, Texas

NOW IS TIME FOR VISITORS

One of the essential features of the Soil Conservation Service Program is to provide demonstrations for farmers both within and without the project area. Every farmer who can possibly do so should see these demonstrations so that he may make his own comparisons.

NOW IS THE BEST TIME TO VISIT A PROJECT OR CAMP AREA TO SEE THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF WINTER STRIP CROPS AND WINTER COVER CROPS

Opportunity is afforded to see the difference between winter cover crops that have been given proper treatment and those that have been severely pastured. See the various farms in the watershed area and in the camp areas to be convinced on this point. Bring someone with you. Transportation and a guide will be furnished if you will call at the project office.

- Project SCS-La-2
Mansfield, Louisiana

A MESSAGE TO THE FARMER

By

Louis A. Windham,
County Agent

The older farmer should realize better than the younger farmer how our soils have changed from better to worse. We can all recall the good old days when we used to make a large yield of cotton or corn per acre, and some farmers even boast of having worn out one or more farms. How many, I wonder, can boast of the fact that they are producing more per acres now than was produced when they were boys, say thirty to forty years ago. I know it is said that labor is not as good as it was in years past, and that the seasons have changed. Many excuses are offered in defense of our production not being what it should be, but few realize the real reason and fewer still admit it and are trying to better their conditions.

In some areas the farmers have had an opportunity to better their conditions through the Soil Conservation Service; and those who have availed themselves of this opportunity are fortunate; those that didn't made a mistake. The Soil Conservation Service has, and will continue, to render a most valuable service to the farmers. I know there are some wonderful new ideas that you possibly don't agree with, or can't appreciate, but remember, these practices have passed the experimental stage and are now being carried out from former results. If the farmers will cooperate with the Soil Conservation Service in the same manner in which they cooperate with the farmer, in a few years we will find ourselves wondering why this Service was not started long years ago.

The world is changing. Are we going to stand still or are we going to change with it and leave a better country than we found? Are we willing to help fill the Gulf with our top soils and leave a devastated, barren, washed away country for the next generation? Or, maybe you are looking forward to many more years of farming activity; if so, try to make them prosperous and pleasant and be able to look back over the years of accomplishments with pride, rather than wish that you had taken advantage of this opportunity, when you have reached your old age.

I wish that each and every farmer in East Feliciana Parish had the same opportunity that those in the Pretty Creek Watershed area have had, then, if all would cooperate, we would have "dreamland" in the future. One of the leaders of the parish made this statement: "If we would have terraced and followed all practices as recommended fifty years ago, we would have paradise today." If we don't do it now, we won't have a goat pasture fifty years hence.

- Project SCS-La-3,
Clinton, Louisiana.

PROJECT NEWS LETTERS WORTHWHILE

The staff of the Soil Conservation Service responsible for the monthly News Letter "The Cypress Creek Watershed News" has often wondered whether or not the publication was being read by the Cooperators of the Service and others on the mailing list. Mr. J. H. Liner of Vienna, one of the oldest Cooperators, answered the question this week.

"I for one have read every article appearing in the News Letter since I received the first issue. The articles are all timely, telling just what approved cropping practices to be observed during each coming month," said Mr. Liner.

"In the December, 1936, issue of the News Letter I read an article by Mr. Fielder, project engineer, who described the proper method of plowing out the terrace channels. I observed this method and can say that it helped my terraces immeasurably," Mr. Liner said.

- Project SCS-La-6,
Ruston, Louisiana.

CULTIVATION SPREADS GRASS

It has been observed that when sod is put out in hard ground with no cultivation given, that spreading is extremely slow and that on poor ground there is practically no spreading at all. In fact an accurate field check of land which was sodded in hard ground in 1935 and given no cultivation, indicates the average set of sod had only four runners of six inches in length.

It has also been observed that a few fields of similar soil where cultivation was given are almost covered over with sod in the same length of time.

In the light of these observations, it seems that in order to get a satisfactory growth of sod on poor soil, it is absolutely necessary to give it some cultivation.

This cultivation should be given in early spring while there is an abundance of moisture in the soil because Bermuda can be damaged by cultivating when it is likely to dry out.

A disk is probably the best implement to use in the cultivation of sod but if a disk is not available, it may be done with a cultivator, a double shovel or any other implement that will work up enough loose soil for good growing conditions. It is suggested that the cultivation be done in strips on the contour.

- SCS-Ark-6,
Conway, Arkansas.

DIRECT WORK OF COOPERATORS

What the Cooperator can do to facilitate and insure getting the work done on their farms, while labor and equipment are still available, is as follows:

1. Leave space for terraces and grub all stumps off the lines.
2. Make fills in low places, before the terraces are built.
3. Help work foremen locate good sod to be used in channels.
4. Clear brush off pastures.
5. Open furrows on pasture to be sodded and be prepared to cover as soon as sod is placed.
6. Get posts distributed along fence to be built and be sure you have plenty of wire and staples.

- SCS-Tex-7,
Nacogdoches, Texas.

BORDER STRIPS

A soil conservation program is not complete until all points susceptible to erosion are protected. In the cultivated area numerous points are not protected by contour tillage, strip cropping and terracing. Cooperators should observe these points and protect them with border strips as soon as weather conditions permit.

Border strips of close growing fibrous-rooted crops planted along field boundaries, terrace outlet channels, roadside ditches, field roads, and at end of rows prevent soil losses by checking the flow of water from the cultivated area. This practice also gives a complete tie in with strip crops and is effective in controlling the growth and spread of undesirable weeds and grasses.

The width of these strips may vary according to the drainage area but should not be less than ten feet. Border strips should be utilized for both summer and winter protection and any of the crops used for strip crops may be used. Permanent border strips of adapted meadow grasses or clovers are desirable.

- Project SCS-Tex-8,
Dublin, Texas.

CONTROL OF WASHES AND GULLIES IN CULTIVATED FIELDS

The effectiveness of terracing and strip cropping in controlling erosion can be materially increased if washes and gullies between terraces and strip crops are plowed in, manured and seeded broadcast to fibrous rooted crops. Any crop used for strip cropping may be used.

This should be done before strip crops are planted in order to reinforce the strip crop with a double seeding in that part of the wash crossed by the strip crop. If winter strips are growing, washes may be plowed in and seeded to summer crops.

This practice slows down the flow of water in the depression causing it to silt in and if continued will eliminate those points of water concentration. Row crops may then be produced the full length of the row interval without endangering terraces or strip crops.

Cooperators with the Soil Conservation Service assume an obligation to control erosion on their farms. This obligation is not fulfilled until all washes between terraces and strip crops are plowed in, manured and stripped.

- Project SCS-Tex-8,
Dublin, Texas.

EROSION CONTROL MEASURES MEAN MORE MOISTURE

Terraces in fields and contour ridges in pastures constructed before last September rains conserved much moisture for 1937 crops. Tests made by C. A. Rechenstain, Soil Surveyor, during February, 1937, show the following results:

Stored Moisture Available for Plant Growth in 5-foot profile:

Terraced land	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches moisture
Contour tilled land	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches moisture
Rows up and down slope	1 inch moisture
Contour ridged pasture	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches moisture
Solid listed pasture	8 inches moisture
No treatment pasture	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches moisture

These tests were made by taking samples of soil to a depth of 5' and testing the samples for moisture content. The amount of available moisture, moisture that the growing plant can obtain from the soil, was determined on a basis of the wilting point for plants. Terraced and strip cropped land and contour ridged and listed pastures at this date have from two to six times the available moisture as areas without complete conservation program.

- Project SCS-Tex-6,
San Angelo, Texas.

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